

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 00985 151256Z

47

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 ISO-00 IO-14 EURE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

OMB-01 AID-20 CU-04 DRC-01 /151 W
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O R 151145Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9289

INFO AMCONSUL LUANDA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

DIA

USCINCEUR

CINCLANT

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 0985

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV PINS PO

SUBJ: CHIEF AND VICE CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES SACKED

SUMMARY: GOP HAS FIRED VICE CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. ANTONIO

DE SPINOLA AND HIS BOSS AND FRIEND, GEN. FRANCISCO

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PAGE 02 LISBON 00985 151256Z

COSTA GOMES. OTHER MILITARY LEADERS HAVE PLEDGED

SUPPORT TO CAETANO. POLITICAL SCENE REMAINS TROUBLED.
END SUMMARY.

1. LATE MARCH 14 GOP ANNOUNCED DISMISSAL ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF COSTA GOMES AND VICE CHIEF OF STAFF ANTONIO DE SPINOLA, WHOSE BOOK CALLING FOR SELF-DETERMINATION OF PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN TERRITORIES (LISBON 0778 AND LISBON 0807) HAS PRECIPITATED POLITICAL TURMOIL. NAMED TO REPLACE COSTA GOMES WAS GENERAL JOAQUIM LUZ CUNHA, COMMANDER IN CHIEF IN ANGOLA. SPINOLA'S POSITION REMAINS VACANT.

2. AFTERNOON OF MARCH 14 PRIME MINISTER CAETANO RECEIVED MILITARY LEADERS FOR PUBLIC MANIFESTATION OF LOYALTY. SPINOLA AND COSTA GOMES FAILED (SEVERAL SOURCES SAY REFUSED) TO APPEAR. CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMY, GENERAL PAIVA BRANDAO, SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT, TOLD CAETANO "THE ARMED FORCES WILL NOT GET INTO POLITICS, BUT IT IS THEIR URGENT DUTY...TO CARRY OUT WHATEVER MISSION MIGHT BE PRESCRIBED BY THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT". CAETANO ACCEPTED "YOUR PLEDGE OF LOYALTY AND DISCIPLINE, YOUR AFFIRMATION THAT THE ARMED FORCES CAN HAVE NO POLICY EXCEPT THAT WHICH IS DEFINED BY THE CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES OF THE REPUBLIC...I DID NOT NEED TO SEE THE AFFIRMATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES REITERATED, BECAUSE I KNOW THAT YOU HOLD THEM. BUT IT IS NECESSARY THAT THE COUNTRY KNOW AS WELL". BRIEF CEREMONY WAS CARRIED LIVE BY RADIO AND LATER ON TV.

3. OVER PAST WEEK 2 TO 4 JUNIOR OFFICERS, SAID TO BE LEADERS OF JUNIOR OFFICERS GROUP WHICH SEES SPINOLA AS ITS CHAMPION, HAVE BEEN SENT TO AZORES AND MADEIRA. TWO OTHERS, A MAJOR AND LTCOL., HAVE BEEN SENT TO POSITIONS IN PORTUGAL OUTSIDE OF LISBON. IN ADDITION, WE UNDERSTAND SEVERAL OFFICERS ARE IN PRISON.

4. CABINET CHANGES IN FIELDS UNRELATED TO MILITARY WERE ANNOUNCED MARCH 13 AND EXPANDED UPON MARCH 14 (SEPTELS). THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IS PRINCIPALLY ECONOMIC, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LISBON 00985 151256Z

ALTHOUGH CHANGES WILL REINFORCE PM'S IMAGE BY SHOWING HIM FIRMLY IN CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT.

5. MILITARY ALERT CALLED MARCH 9 WAS SUBSEQUENTLY EASED, AND HAS BEEN REINSTATED AT 50 PERCENT MANNING.

6. COMMENT: DISMISSAL OF COSTA GOMES AND SPINOLA AND APPOINTMENT OF LUZ CUNHA, WHO HAS REPUTATION OF

HARDLINE RIGHT-WINGER (AND WHOSE CREDENTIALS INCLUDE PERSONAL DISLIKE FOR SPINOLA), IS A CLEAR (BUT POSSIBLY ONLY TEMPORARY) VICTORY FOR PRESIDENT THOMAZ AND THE RIGHT. AFTER RESISTING FOR THREE WEEKS RIGHT-WING CALLS FOR SPINOLA'S HEAD, CAETANO CAVED; REASONS UNCLEAR AT PRESENT. WE CANNOT NOW ESTIMATE WHAT WILL BE REACTION OF PRO-SPINOLA JUNIOR OFFICERS, WHOSE LEADERS DISPERSED. LISBON IS FILLED WITH RUMORS OF MORE CABINET CHANGES. POLITICAL CRISIS IS NOT OVER.
SCOTT

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, PO, (DE SPINOLA, ANTONIO), (COSTA GOMES, FRANCISCO)
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